

British martyrs, Douai printers, German readers

A fieldwork update

In the previous months I compiled a database of religious books printed in the ecclesiastical province of Cambrai between 1559 and 1659, which was the first aim of the doctoral project *The making of transregional Catholicism*. From the late 1560s this region, including towns such as Douai and Saint-Omer, became an important refuge for English, Scottish and Irish Catholic exiles. So, last week I had closer look into some of the printing offices involved in printing literature written or edited by these Catholic exiles.

Amongst others, the printing business of Laurence Kellam, an English exile himself, was involved in printing books that were to be shipped clandestinely to Catholic readers on the British Isles. After working in Leuven and Valenciennes for some years, Kellam arrived in Douai around 1603. Having studied in the late 1570s at the English College at Reims, he first focused on publishing books related to English Catholicism. [1] Gradually he broadened his scope by printing some French books and theses written by theology students of the University of Douai. [2] After his death c. 1613, the business was continued by his widow and sons until 1661, who continued to publish books on English Catholic matters, in English as well as in Latin and French.

In contrast to the numerous English editions spread on the British Isles – and still preserved in many British and American libraries – the Latin editions, mostly dealing with English and Scottish Catholic martyrs, must have been directed towards Catholic communities across Europe. Indeed, while searching for existing copies through online library catalogues, I found a lot of these editions in libraries in the southwest of present-day Germany (Munich, Augsburg, Dillingen, ...). This may be no surprise, as in the Catholic south of the Holy Roman Empire (Bavaria, Austria) there certainly was an interest in these tales. Moreover, some Scottish cloisters and seminaries had been established there [3], as was also the case in the Habsburg Netherlands and especially in the ecclesiastical province of Cambrai.

Fascinated by this connection between Douai and Southern Germany, I continued my search in German, Austrian and Swiss library catalogues. After a while, I came across some books that were reissues of the Kellam editions, often

printed within a year after the first edition. Some of these were still in Latin, while others had been translated from French into German. [4] The title pages of the editions from Mainz, Dillingen or Ingolstadt explicitly stated that these books had been printed in Douai before ('Duaci primo excusum, nunc recusum', or similar descriptions). No doubt the Kellam business was important in spreading Catholic books on the British Isles, but these findings made me realize that it was also crucial in spreading tales of British martyrs throughout Catholic Europe, thus contributing to the making of a transregional Catholicism.

Moreover, the Kellam editions were not the only ones to be found in the libraries of Southern Germany. One can also discover books by other Douai printers, such as Pierre Auroy and Martin Bogart, who both had clear connections with the exile community. Most likely the Douai editions also reached France, Spain, Italy and maybe, through the Dutch Mission, the Catholics living in the Dutch Republic. So, based on these preliminary searches, the presses in the ecclesiastical province of Cambrai did not only produce large amounts of books for Catholics on the British Isles, but also contributed in spreading and advocating the cause of English Catholicism on the continent. These martyr tales crossing borders however are but one example of the role played by the ecclesiastical province of Cambrai in assembling a transregional arsenal of Catholic stories in the first decades of the seventeenth century.

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[1] Some biographical data on Kellam are provided by Anne Rouzet, *Dictionnaire des imprimeurs, libraires et éditeurs des XVe et XVIe siècles dans les limites géographiques de la Belgique actuelle* (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf 1975) 110.

[2] Besides the Kellam office also printed books commissioned by Balthazar Bellere, the most important printer in 17th-century Douai, as Anna Simoni has uncovered (see: Anna E.C. Simoni, 'The hidden trade-mark of Laurence Kellam, printer at Douai', *Ons geestelijk erf* 64 (1990) 130–143).

[3] These so-called *Schottenkloster* (Benedictine Order) were located in Regensburg, Erfurt and Würzburg.

[4] For instance the *Warhaffter Bericht, welcher Gestalt der ehrwürdige Herr Johann von Mervinia, des weit berühmten Ordens S. Benedicti, den 20. Decembris nächst verschinens 1610. Jars zu Londern in Engelland wegen des catholischen Glaubens gemartert worden* (Augsburg: Christoff Wang, 1611; VD17 12:118122F) of which the title page mentions 'Auß dem zu Douay in Niderland getructen Französischen Exemplaren summarischer Weiß in das Teutsch gebracht'. A digital copy of this German translation is available via the [Bayerische Staatsbibliothek](#). The original French edition was entitled *Discours et traicté veritable du martire enduré a Londres en*

Angleterre par le R. Pere Jean de Mervinia, autrement dit Roberts, Religieux tres renommé de l'Ordre S. Benoist de la Congregation d'Espagne executé le 20. de Decembre l'An 1610 (Douai: Laurence Kellam, 1611).